

Roberts (2010) on Romance Cliticisation

Chapter 3: Head-Movement or No Head-Movement?

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Head-Movement Seminar with Martin Salzmann
15th July 2014

General Idea:

- Romance cliticisation is not head movement
- Neither as standard head-adjunction, nor as Matushansky-style XP-movement + m-merger
- Cliticisation is just Agree
- Capitalizing on ‘defectivity’

1 Introduction

- (1) *Object clitics in Romance, Italian*
- Gianni vede lui.
Gianni sees him.strong.pron
‘Gianni sees HIM.’
 - Gianni lo=vede.
Gianni him=sees
‘Gianni sees him.’

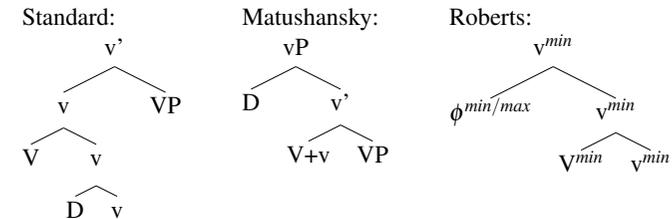
Clitics are characterised as follows.

- “word-like in their grammar, but phonologically must lean for support” (Matthews, 1991: 217)
- More independent in their distribution than affixes: hosts of different categories, sometimes enclitic and sometimes proclitic
- Both minimal and maximal categories (Muysken, 1982)
- Move both as heads and as XPs (Sportiche, 1996)

Question: How do clitics come to be?

- Are they D-heads that adjoin to V/v?
- Or are they a mere morpho-phonological effect of m-merger as in Matushansky (2006)?
- Is there agreement/Agree involved?

(2) *Possible trees:*

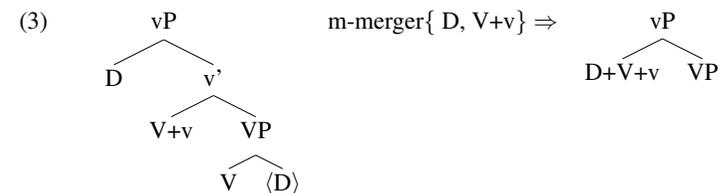


2 Intermediate Analysis

- Roberts will end up saying that HM only ever happens in a very restricted context and that clitics are mere Agree, i.e. there is no HM of D to v involved!
- To get there he first argues in favor of narrow-syntax HM
- He therefore argues against the contending analysis by Matushansky, where Romance cliticisation is not a purely morpho-phonological phenomenon. He does so by showing that

Matushansky 2006:

- Object clitics are XPs that move to the specifier of v (actually to T, but to v for sake of exposition)
- There they cliticise by the means of m-merger



By comparing Romance complement-clitic movement and Scandinavian object-shift, Roberts shows that HM is needed anyway and that m-merger is therefore redundant.

(4) *Scandinavian object-shift*

- a. Hvorfor læste Peter den aldrig/*aldrig den?
why read Peter it never/never it
'Why did Peter never read it?'
- b. Hvorfor har Peter (*den) aldrig læst den?
why has Peter it never read it
'Why has Peter never read it?'

Similarities:

- Both involve a specific interpretation of the object
- This can be treated as the result of an EPP-feature on v, which is also responsible for the movement

Differences:

- Romance has an EPP-feature on v, triggering movement, only with clitics
- I.e. only with min/max categories
- Max categories like strong object pronouns do not move.
- No 'm-merger' in Scandinavian
- 'M-merger' in Romance

- (5) Gianni li/ *loro/ *questi studenti stima *li/
Gianni them.CL them.STRONG these students esteems them.CL
loro/ questi studenti.
them.STRONG these students
'Gianni esteems them/these students.'

Conclusion:

- The EPP-feature on v is relativised to min categories in Romance
- This results in HM
- HM targets v, which is a phase
- Being sent off together to PF creates a morpho-phonological unit of Clitic+(V+)v
- M-merger is redundant under narrow-syntax HM analysis

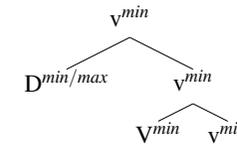
3 Analysis

New starting point:

- Clitic moves to the edge of v

- Agree applies
- Clitic and v are sent off together to the interfaces forming one unit afterwards

(6)



Two central parts need to be defined to get there:

- The right surface order of D > V > v (or D > v > V)
- Distinction between minimal and maximal categories
 - Only clitics move
 - Clitics move as heads
 - Also the v-heads dominating D and V should still be minimal to get something like complex head formation

3.1 Surface order

Desideratum: D > V > v (or D > v > V)

- Left-Adjunction → LCA
- V-movement > D-movement → definition of 'prominence' derived from the way in which Merge works

V-movement > D-movement

General idea: The Strict Cycle forces 'more deeply' embedded structures to move first. Two approaches are discussed: one based on *c-command* and one based on a deeper *merger-mergee-relation*

C-command:

- Bad because more deeply embedded is an asymmetrical relation
- So we need asymmetric c-command
- V and D in complement position do not c-command each other asymmetrically

Merge-asymmetry based on Lechner (2006); Hornstein (2009)

- More promising: a deeper asymmetry between V and D can be found within the mechanics of Merge

- When two categories merge, the set $\{\alpha, \beta\}$ is formed. This is still fully symmetric
- However, only one category projects: if that category is α , the set $\{\alpha, \{\alpha, \beta\}\}$ is formed. This is like the ordered pair $\langle \alpha, \beta \rangle$
- So Merge is somehow not symmetric after all
- A *merger* and a *mergee* can be differentiated, based on the outcome of projection/labelling. The former is the category that does not project, the latter the one that does

Roberts generalises over the two approaches in terms of *prominence* of phrase-structure status:

- (7) α is more prominent than β iff either:
- α is a merger for β (i.e. β projects the label of $\{\alpha, \beta\}$), or
 - there is a category γ , γ a mergee for β , such that δ (reflexively) dominates γ , and α is a merger for δ .

The Strict Cycle can therefore be reformulated in terms of prominence:

- (8) Less prominent categories must be move before more prominent ones.

In our configuration in (9), where we started from, it now follows from the Strict Cycle in (8), that V must move before D.

- (9) $\{V, \{V, D\}\}$
-

Left-Adjunction

If V moves before D, one must simply assume left-adjunction to get the right surface order. To ensure this is compulsory, Roberts assumes the LCA (Linear Correspondence Axiom, Kayne, 1994).

- Originally, the LCA is based on asymmetric c-command:
If α asymmetrically c-commands β , then α linearly precedes β .

- This, too, can now be reformulated in terms of prominence

- (10) *LCA, based on prominence:*
If α is more prominent than β , then α linearly precedes β .

3.2 Minimal/Maximal Categories

Desideratum: structure where the heads move to v

- without m-merger
- nor classic head-adjunction
- but specifier-like movement
- where both v and the elements moved are minimal categories
- i.e. something like (6) repeated in (11)

- (11)
-

To get there Roberts will capitalise on the synergy between

- the notion of *nondistinctiveness* in his definitions of minimal/maximal categories, and
- the notion of *structural deficiency* at the core of his re-analysis of clitics vs. other pronouns based on Cardinaletti and Starke (1999)

Minimal categories

- Three distinctions in bare phrase structure (Chomsky, 1995): X^0 vs. X^{min} vs. X^{max}
- X^0 s are those Xs that adjoin to another head (standard HM)
- Roberts has abandoned standard HM, so only X^{min} vs. X^{max} remain

The following definitions are given:

- (12) a. The label L of category α is minimal iff α dominates no category β whose label is distinct from α 's.
b. The label L of category β is maximal iff there is no immediately dominating category α whose label is nondistinct from β 's.

- (13) a. X_2
-
- b. Y_3
-
- c. Y_2
-

- In (13-a) $X_2 =$

- $X_1 =$
- $Y =$
- In (13-c) $X =$
- $Y_1 =$
- Crucially: $Y_2 =$

Deficiency

Roberts follows Cardinaletti and Starke (1999)'s take on clitics: they are *structurally deficient* elements, i.e. they lack some functional layers. Roberts takes the more extreme view, also taking away the original lexical projection. The view of structural deficiency comes from (i) the clitics need to incorporate into their host, and (ii) the clitics inability to surface in argument position or 'peripheral position' like just before an ellipsis site, be modified, or be coordinated.

- (14) a. *Ho visto=lo.
have.1.SG seen=him
'I saw him.'
- b. Chi hai visto? *Lo.
Who have.2.SG seen him.CL
'Who did you see? Him.'
- c. *Lo=solamente ho visto.
him=only have.1.SG seen
'I have seen only him.'
- d. *La=e l=ho visti.
her=and him=have.1.SG seen.PL
'I saw her and him.'

Result of stripping off of functional layers:

- Clitics are just $\phi(P)$ s, rather than $D(P)$ s
- Clitics $\rightarrow \phi^{min/max}$
- Strong pronouns $\rightarrow D^{min/max}$

Back to our desideratum with the changes in place:



With a closer look now we will notice that the v dominating ϕ can indeed be minimal:

- v probes its complements for ϕ -features
- v contains *phi*-features
- Here goes the magic: **v and the clitic are nondistinct**
- **the v dominating the clitic is minimal** following (12-a)

3.3 Incorporation

Of the building blocks that make up Roberts's version of HM, so far we got one part of the movement-to-a-minimal-category part, namely the part where the landing site is minimal. We are close to getting the movement part
But remember: there will actually be no movement (for the clitics).

Specifically to clitics, we started off with two descriptive cores of clitics:

- Clitics move as minimal categories to v
- Clitics incorporate into their host, here: into v

A slightly more substantive condition on incorporation can now be given based on nondistinctiveness (and minimality of the categories):

- (16) Incorporation can take place only where the label of the incorporee is nondistinct from that of the incorporation host.

- V -to- v is movement of a root (V gets its verbal character from v), therefore V -root is nondistinct from v
- the same goes for N -roots, A -roots etc.
- clitics can incorporate, too, because they are just ϕ s and v contains the same features

3.4 (Non-)Movement

Finally, given all the pieces, Roberts turns to Agree.

- v is always in an Agree relation with the objects
- Agree is assumed to be standard minimalist Agree
- Given the definitions of minimal categories and the condition on incorporation both based on nondistinctiveness and the deficiency of clitics it follows that

- Agree $\{v, clitic\}$ looks exactly the same as movement of the clitic to v
- With Agree, the ϕ -features of the goal are copied and the copied material is transferred onto the probe on v
- With movement the *whole* category is copied and the copied material is transferred to the landing site
- **With clitics, ϕ -features are the *whole* category**
- Again: movement and Agree of clitics are indistinguishable

The structure once more:



Crucially:

- The copied features on v asymmetrically c-command the clitic
- The two occurrences of the ϕ -feature sets form a *chain*
- *Chain-reduction* in the sense of Nunes (2004) can be applied.
- **Only the copy on v remains undeleted** (the highest/most specified copy)
- Final structure looks like movement/HM/incorporation, but is actually just Agree

4 Conclusion

- Cliticization/object-clitic movement in Romance is reduced to Agree > Chain-formation > Chain-reduction
- This is enabled by
 - the definitions of minimality/maximality of categories based on nondistinctiveness which enables higher projections of a head to still be minimal in certain contexts
 - the analysis of clitics as just ϕ^{min} s based on deficiency by stripping off all higher functional layers
- The morpho-phonological unity of clitic+v is given by the fact that v as a word is a phase
- This also enable further excorporation for ‘movement’ up to T or C

5 Discussion

- The definition of nondistinctness has a direction, which crucially goes from the dominating category down on the dominated one for minimality, and the other way round for maximality (nondistinct $\langle \alpha, \beta \rangle \neq$ nondistinct $\langle \beta, \alpha \rangle$)
- Case: Roberts assumes that clitics are deficient of D. Generally, case is assumed to be on D (and if not than higher than ϕ). Roberts explicitly says he does away with case for clitics in a different way: different ‘clitic-cases’ are incorporation with different heads
- If there is no case-feature on the clitics, they are not active for probing
- Modals, auxiliaries, generally clitics higher than v, e.g. (18). Roberts Agree-HM must be iterative.

- (18)
- Lo=voglio fare.
it=want.1.SG do.INF
 - Voglio far=lo.
want.1.SG do.INF=it
‘I want to do it.’

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